

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 OMB-01 IO-13 /089 W

-----027726 011024Z /20

P R 010935Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8313

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, MY, VM, ASEAN, PORC

SUBJECT: ASEAN RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

REF: (A) PARIS 21930 (NOTAL), (B) KUALA LUMPUR 4946 (NOTAL)

1. WHILE EXPERTS MEET TO THRASH OUT TECHNICAL DETAILS RELATING TO INTRA-ASEAN COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC FIELDS, JOURNALISTS AND LOCAL OBSERVERS CONTINUE TO RELISH SPECULATING ABOUT INDOCHINESE STATES -- PARTICULARLY SRV -- ATTITUDES TOWARD ASEAN, AND VICE VERSA. THUS, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN WHETHER SRV AMBASSADOR VU BACH MAI WILL ATTEND AUGUST 3 AIRPORT ARRIVAL CEREMONIES FOR ASEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AND AUGUST 4 CEREMONIAL OPENING OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SUMMIT TO WHICH ALL LOCAL CHIEFS OF MISSION HAVE BEEN INVITED. PREVAILING OPINION, ACCORDING ONE OF OUR BETTER INFORMED JOURNALISTIC CONTACTS, IS THAT HE WILL NOT.

2. MASS CIRCULATION "NEW STRAITS TIMES," WRITING ON ISSUE, AUG 1 NOTED THAT INVITATION TO SRV REP WAS "VIEWED AS A FURTHER GESTURE OF FRIENDSHIP FROM ASEAN, EXTENDED DESPITE RECENT

STRONG ACCUSATIONS AGAINST ASEAN" ALLEGING THAT ASEAN WAS A SEATO TYPE MILITARY ALLIANCE. ACCORDING NST, "ASEAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE REMAINED COOL AND HAVE BEEN MAKING CONCILIATORY PRO- NOUNCEMENTS IN THE FACE OF VIETNAMESE DENUNCIATIONS," CITING HANOI'S POLICY OF ATTACKING ASEAN AS A GROUP WHILE SEEKING FRIENDLY BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH INDIVIDUAL ASEAN MEMBERS.

3. INTERVIEWED ON ARRIVAL YESTERDAY (JULY 31), FOREIGN MINISTERS ROMULO OF THE PHILIPPINES AND MALIK OF INDONESIA SPOKE IN CONCILIATORY VEIN. ROMULO OPINED THAT SRV CRITICISM DERIVED FROM LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION AND EXPRESSED HOPE "THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO BUILD A TRUE FOUNDATION FOR CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION." MALIK ON HIS PART REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE INDOCHINESE STATES "ARE GOOD NEIGHBORS," COMMENTING THAT "INDOCHINA HAS JUST COME OUT FROM 25 YEARS OF WAR. IT NEEDS TIME TO RECONSTRUCT AND CONSOLIDATE. WHY ARE WE IN A HURRY TO PUSH THEM TO SUPPORT US?"

4. EARLIER, IN REMARKS TO NEWSMEN TOUCHING ON THE SUBJECT OF EXTRA-REGIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN ASEAN AND OTHER COUNTRIES AND GROUPINGS, FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN STATED JULY 28 THAT ASEAN'S INTEREST IN EXPANDING ECONOMIC LINKS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WAS NOT LIMITED TO COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA, WITH WHOM CONSULTATIONS WILL BE HELD SHORTLY; "ASEAN IS ALSO PREPARED TO FORGE LINKS WITH THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES," HE STATED.
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5. COMMENT: SUBJECT OF RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM AND OTHER INDO-CHINESE COMMUNIST REGIMES IS LIKELY TO FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS DURING FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS TODAY AND TOMORROW (AUG 1 AND 2) AND SUMMIT ITSELF (AUG 4-5). IN VIEW SOVIET AMBIVALENCE ON ASEAN, IT WILL ALSO BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW PRESS TREATS PRESENCE OF SOVIET REP AT CEREMONIAL PROCEEDINGS, ASSUMING HE ACCEPTS THE INVITATION. RE FORMALIZED LINKS WITH EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES (READ USSR), PRIMARY INDUSTRIES MINISTER MUSA HITAM TOUCHED ON THIS POSSIBILITY IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR MILLER 28 (SEE REFTEL B).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC COOPERATION, FOREIGN RELATIONS, COMMUNISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 01-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KUALA05018
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770274-0801
Format: TEL
From: KUALA LUMPUR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197708111/aaaadqnp.tel
Line Count: 106
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b465b350-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 PARIS 21930, 77 KUALA LUMPUR 4946
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1436183
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASEAN RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST COUNTRIES
TAGS: PDIP, PORG, PFOR, MY, VM, ASEAN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b465b350-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009